

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

selecting one or more data packets from a data packet sequence for encryption to provide a plurality of selected packets and a plurality of unselected data packets; encrypting the selected data packets; and initiating the transmission of the encrypted data packets and unselected data packets as an output data packet sequence in a transmission medium.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein method further comprises:

detecting data packet sequence information in one or more reference data packets in the data packet sequence; and

selecting the reference data packets for encryption.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the data packet sequence comprises an ordered sequence of data packets and method further comprises selecting every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence for encryption over at least a portion of the data packet sequence.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the data packet sequence comprises compressed video data.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the compressed video data comprises MPEG video data, and the method further comprises selecting at least data packets of I-pictures having a sequence header code for encryption.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the method further comprises selecting every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence between consecutive data packets having a sequence header code.

7. An apparatus comprising:

means for selecting one or more data packets from a data packet sequence for encryption to provide a plurality of selected data packets and a plurality of unselected data packets;

means for encrypting the selected data packets; and

means for initiating the transmission of the encrypted data packets and unselected data packets as an output data packet sequence in a transmission medium.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein apparatus further comprises:

means for detecting data packet sequence information in one or more reference data packets in the data packet sequence; and

means for selecting the reference data packets for encryption.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the data packet sequence comprises an ordered sequence of data packets and apparatus further comprises means for selecting every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence for encryption over at least a portion of the data packet sequence.

10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the data packet sequence comprises compressed video data.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the compressed video data comprises MPEG video data, and the apparatus further comprises means for selecting at least data packets of I-pictures having a sequence header code for encryption.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the apparatus further comprises means for selecting every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence between consecutive data packets having a sequence header code.

13. A system of transmitting a data stream in a transmission medium, the system comprising:

a data transmission source comprising:

logic to select one or more data packets from a data packet sequence for encryption to provide a plurality of selected packets and a plurality of unselected data packets;

logic to encrypt the selected data packets; and

logic to initiate the transmission of the encrypted data packets with the unselected data packets as an output data packet sequence in the transmission medium; and

a data destination adapted to receive the transmitted output data packet sequence.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the data source further comprises:

logic to detect data packet sequence information in one or more reference data packets in the data packet sequence; and

logic to select the reference data packets for encryption.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the data packet sequence comprises an ordered sequence of data packets and data source further comprises logic to select every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence for encryption over at least a portion of the data packet sequence.

16. The system of claim 13, wherein the data packet sequence comprises compressed video data.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the compressed video data comprises MPEG video data, and the data source further comprises logic to select at least data packets of I-pictures having a sequence header code for encryption.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the data source further comprises logic to select every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence between consecutive data packets having a sequence header code.

19. An article comprising:

a storage medium comprising machine-readable instructions stored thereon for:

selecting one or more data packets from a data packet sequence for encryption to provide a plurality of selected packets and a plurality of unselected data packets;

encrypting the selected data packets; and

initiating the transmission of the encrypted data packets with the unselected data packets as an output data packet sequence in a transmission medium.

20. The article of claim 19, wherein the storage medium further comprises machine-readable instructions stored thereon for:

detecting data packet sequence information in one or more reference data packets in the data packet sequence; and

selecting the reference data packets for encryption.

21. The article of claim 20, wherein the data packet sequence comprises an ordered sequence of data packets and storage medium further comprises machine-readable instructions stored thereon for selecting every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence for encryption over at least a portion of the data packet sequence.

22. The article of claim 19, wherein the data packet sequence comprises compressed video data.

23. The article of claim 22, wherein the compressed video data comprises MPEG video data, and the storage medium method further comprises machine-readable instructions stored thereon for selecting at least data packets of I-pictures having a sequence header code for encryption.

24. The article of claim 23, wherein the storage medium further comprises machine-readable instructions stored thereon for selecting every Nth data packet in the data packet sequence between consecutive data packets having a sequence header code.

25. A method comprising:

receiving a data packet sequence comprising encrypted data packets and unencrypted data packets;

decrypting one or more of the encrypted data packets to provide decrypted information; and

decoding or decompressing information in one or more unencrypted data packets based upon the decrypted information.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the data packet sequence comprises MPEG video data and the method further comprises:

decrypting one or more of the encrypted data packets to provide I-picture data; and

decoding or decompressing information in one or more of the unencrypted data packets to provide one of B-picture data and P-picture data based upon the I-picture data.

27. An apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a data packet sequence comprising encrypted data packets and unencrypted data packets;

means for decrypting one or more of the encrypted data packets to provide decrypted information; and

means for decoding or decompressing information in one or more unencrypted data packets based upon the decrypted information.

28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the data packet sequence comprises MPEG video data and the method further comprises:

means for decrypting one or more of the encrypted data packets to provide I-picture data; and

means for decoding or decompressing information in one or more of the unencrypted data packets to provide one of B-picture data and P-picture data based upon the I-picture data.

29. An article comprising:

a storage medium comprising machine-readable instructions stored thereon for:

receiving a data packet sequence comprising encrypted data packets and unencrypted data packets;

decrypting one or more of the encrypted data packets to provide decrypted information; and

decoding or decompressing information in one or more unencrypted data packets based upon the decrypted information.

30. The article of claim 29, wherein the data packet sequence comprises MPEG video data and the storage medium further comprises machine-readable instructions stored thereon for:

decrypting one or more of the encrypted data packets to provide I-picture data; and

decoding or decompressing information in one or more of the unencrypted data packets to provide one of B-picture data and P-picture data based upon the I-picture data.